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## A SCHOOL-FRIEND OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

DIED last Christmas-day—Sir Adam Ferguson, the school-friend of Scott, and his friend through life—a conspicuous figure, of course, in Mr Lockhart's biography of the great fictionist. Many interesting and pleasant memories hovered around the name of this fine old man, and in his removal from the world, one important link between the Old and the New is severed. It will be almost startling to our readers, to hear that there lived so lately one who could say that he had sat on the knee of David Hume. Yet such was the case. Sir Adam had often been so seated, and received *bon-bons* from the pocket of the philosopher—of the benevolent expression of whose countenance, he said, no portrait gave an adequate representation. Equally surprising it must be to think of the deceased as the son of one who fought in the battle of Fontenoy. Yet this also is true. At that action, which took place in May 1745, Adam Ferguson, the father of our friend, was present as chaplain of the Black Watch—the same regiment which, under the name of the Forty-second, has distinguished itself so much in the recent conflicts in the Crimea. The colonel was rather surprised to see the chaplain coming on among the rest, with a broadsword in his hand, and ordered him to the rear. He would not go—the colonel threatened him with the loss of his commission. He took out the document from his pocket, and throwing it on the ground with an exclamation more significant than clerical, joined in that charge which the French afterwards described as so terrible—when ‘the Highland furies,’ they said, ‘rushed in upon us with more violence than ever did a sea driven by a tempest.’

Even this curious fact does not give the case in its strongest light. The present writer can never forget the strange feeling which came over him one day, when, chancing to meet Sir Adam Ferguson on a country ride, in the neighbourhood of an old mansion-house near Edinburgh, he heard the ancient knight remark:

‘There is Brunstain House, where my father lived in 1742, as secretary to Justice-clerk Milton!’

This Lord Milton was the acting *sous-ministre* for Scotland in the administration of Walpole. Here was a limb of Walpole's government, it might be said, speaking the other day through a son. It seemed to crumple up time, and make it look as nothing. It may be added, that this young secretary's father was pastor of the Aberdeenshire parish in which Balmoral is situated, immediately after the Revolution; and in his manse at Crathie, he had given shelter to some of the unfortunate Macdonalds of Glencoe, on their flight from the celebrated massacre.

It may be remarked, that the secretary afterwards came to be professor of moral philosophy in the Edinburgh university, and an eminent author. The work by which he is best known is his *History of the Roman Republic*. He acted as secretary to the commission sent out by Lord North in 1778, to try to make up matters with the Americans; and endeavoured on that occasion, but in vain, to be allowed to go in person to the congress at Yorktown, and lay the British proposals before them. He was in many respects a singular man. Having had a stroke of paralysis at sixty, he put himself upon a rigid vegetable and milk diet, with an entire abstinence from intoxicating liquors, and thus survived thirty-three years, dying at last rather because he had ceased to wish to live, than from any failure of the powers of life. That is to say, the interest he felt in the war being at an end in 1815, he became comparatively careless about regimen and other such matters, and so sunk in the ensuing year. Perhaps never did any Stoic philosopher more completely subject his passions and feelings to his reason than did Dr Adam Ferguson.

The son was in many respects a contrast to the father. Although a man of good talents, he never shewed the least disposition to concentrate them in any course by which distinction was to be won. Gay and light-hearted, he was entirely calculated for the *insouciant* life of a soldier; and a soldier he accordingly became. He had made an attempt, indeed, to enter life as a writer to the Signet (equivalent to the English solicitor); but it was of no use. How happy must have been the ‘messes’ which he joined! Barrack-life could have had with him no dulness. The hardest campaign must have been sensibly alleviated, if Ferguson shared in it, for he had a pleasantry for every possible contingency. It must have been surprising to any English brother-officer to consider him as a Scotsman, for not one particle of that sagacious and somewhat repulsive gravity which is attributed to the nation belonged to him. It would not have been surprising, however, to discover how much goodness of disposition and solid worth were joined to this gay temper.

Ferguson, who was the senior of Scott by less than a year, met him at the High School; and they immediately became friends. At that time, Dr Ferguson lived in a solitary suburban villa, which his friends used to call Kamtschatka, on account of its being so far out of the way; and here, every Sunday, he received a few of his brother literati at dinner. Black, the illustrious chemist, whose niece he had married; Hutton, the father of modern geology; Robertson, the historian; John Home, the author of the tragedy of *Douglas*;

Smith, the author of the *Wealth of Nations*; and Dugald Stewart, were among the ordinary visitors of Kamtschatka; and into this brilliant circle Scott was introduced, when a mere boy, by his boy-friend Adam. One day, in 1787, Dugald Stewart brought with him, as a kind of *protégé*, the poet Robert Burns, who had then just burst upon the public gaze. Scott was there, a noteless youth, glad to keep by some safe corner of the room, whence he might eye the luminaries at a distance, without ever presuming to think himself worthy of conversing with any of them. This was the only occasion on which Burns and Scott were ever brought together; and Scott, many years after, gave an account of the meeting to Mr Lockhart. He speaks particularly of the poet's large black eye, which he says 'literally glowed when he spoke with feeling or interest.' But Ferguson told some particulars which Scott's modesty suppressed. He used to say that Burns did not at first join the circle, or attempt to enter into their conversation, but casting his eye on a framed print which hung on the wall, he became quickly interested in the scene which it displayed. It was a winter-piece by Bunbury, representing a dead soldier on the ground, with his wife and child lamenting over him; and these lines inscribed below:—

Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,  
Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain;  
Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,  
The big drops mingling with the milk he drew,  
Sad, mournful presage of his future years,  
The child of misery baptised in tears.

The eyes of Burns overflowed as he read, and he turned with an agitated voice to the company, asking if any one knew who wrote those beautiful lines. The philosophers sat mute; and after an interval, young Walter said half aloud and very carelessly: 'They're written by one Langhorne.' Burns caught the response, and seeming both surprised and amused that a boy should know what all those eminent men were ignorant of, he said to Scott: 'You'll be a man yet, sir.' Rather oddly, we have found, on an inspection of the identical copy of the print, that the name 'Langhorne' is inscribed below the lines, though in so small a character, that when the picture hung on a wall, it might well have escaped the notice of both Burns and Scott.

Through all their days of youth, the intimacy of Ferguson with Walter Scott knew no abatement. Many were the merry meetings in which they took part, in the Edinburgh oyster-cellars, and the taverns of Newhaven; but Ferguson always bore strong testimony to the practically virtuous and temperate life of Scott in those days. When Scott, as a writer's apprentice, went to serve some writ upon a recalcitrant farmer in the Perthshire Highlands, and thus made his first acquaintance with those romantic scenes which he afterwards introduced into his *Lady of the Lake*, Ferguson accompanied him. Some years before the close of the century, Dr Ferguson lived in a very retired place called Hall-yards, amidst the pastoral hills of Peeblesshire, where a misshapen and eccentric dwarf, of most uncanny aspect, called David Ritchie, was a near neighbour. In 1797, Scott came to pay the Fergusons a visit there, and was taken to see David, as one of the lions of the district. The misanthrope—for so he was—seeing Scott's lameness, seemed to take to him more than he did to strangers generally, and having perhaps heard of his curious old-world

learning, took him firmly by the wrist, saying, in his harsh wild voice: 'Ha'e ye ony poo'er?'—meaning magical power. The visitor seemed appalled by the look and words of the dwarf, and as the door of the little murky cottage had been shut and bolted, he evidently seemed far from being comfortable. With a blanched cheek and trembling frame, he murmured a disclaimer of gifts above this world—when David, rousing up a hitherto unseen huge black cat, the creature sprang upon the window-hole, where it intercepted the only light that entered the hut. 'He has poo'er!' added the dwarf, pointing through the gloom to what might have seemed his familiar. This was such a scene as does not often occur in civilised life, and it impressed the future novelist greatly. Out of the occurrence, twenty years after, sprung his tale of the *Black Dwarf*.

Another of Dr Ferguson's neighbours was a laird of antique stamp, who had six blooming daughters, to one of whom young Adam had dared to lift the eyes of affection. It was agreed by Scott to accompany his friend on a call at the manor-house, and as far as possible make play, so as to help him to an opportunity of saying a few private words to the young lady. After some chat in the parlour, the party took a walk in the garden, where Ferguson contrived to move on in front with his *inamorato*, while the old spectacled laird, with his stick over his shoulder, brought up the rear, attended by the story-telling Scott. The lover, at the end of a walk, heard his friend's voice: 'It was in the year fourteen hundred and eighty-three,' &c.; and was just thinking he might safely advance a very interesting proposition to his fair companion, when suddenly the laird's voice broke in: 'Now that's what I cannot allow. There must be nothing of the kind. I can give no permission—so you need not attempt it.' He turned in alarm, to see the laird starting forward in an excited manner, while Scott came limping after, with a vain attempt to recall his attention to the fifteenth century. 'Oh, it is all over with me,' thought he; and from that moment abandoned his hopes. What was his mortification afterwards, to learn that the laird had never once thought of interdicting his passion, but was merely anxious to debar him from attacking a particular kind of red gooseberry, which he had set aside for his own eating, and which he thought his young visitor was approaching rather too near!

Ferguson joined his first regiment at Ayr, and found the officers, especially the young ones, somewhat prejudiced against him, on account of having already entered life in a civil profession. By the virtues of a barrel of Edinburgh oysters and a small keg of Highland whisky, not to speak of his own delightful songs and stories, he wonderfully overcame all difficulty; yet still there was a disposition to quiz him. When it was known that he was ordered to take out the men to parade one morning, there was an assemblage of the young ones at the head of a close opposite, to enjoy the sight of his awkwardness; but, behold, the ex-writer managed the men as well as if he had been twenty years in the army. Observing the lurking-party across the way, he called out: 'Ah, you dogs, I see what you're after; but ye didn't know that I was an old hand in the Edinburgh Volunteers!' He was in reality a completely schooled officer, but had concealed the fact in order to countermine them.

He passed through the Peninsular War under Wellington, and told many pleasant stories of his campaigns, most of which have vanished from our memory. One, referring to the only occasion of his ever coming in contact with the great commander, was very apt to turn up. He was posted with a small party beside a river, to watch its subsidence from a flood, as it was expected that the enemy only waited till it was fordable before crossing to make an attack. The commander

came riding up with one or two of his staff, and began to inquire about the state of the river, but at the same time kept constantly looking about, as if more than half engaged with some other kind of reconnaissance. Ferguson said he thought the river was now passable.

'Have you been accustomed to judge of rivers?'

'Yes.'

'What river have you known?'

'The Tweed, my lord.'

'The Tweed, the Tweed,' said Wellington abstractedly, and still looking about.

'Yes, my lord, the Tweed, which divides Scotland from England,' answered Ferguson, betrayed into a piece of ludicrous explanation by the absorbed manner of his commander. At that moment, his eye caught Sir Thomas Picton bursting out into a fit of laughter, in which Lord Wellington could not refrain from joining; and we rather think this laugh took a complete round of the army, and that several weeks elapsed before Ferguson heard the end of it.

In 1811, Ferguson wrote to his old friend Scott from Lisbon. 'I need not tell you how greatly I was delighted with the success of the *Lady of the Lake*. I daresay you are by this time well tired of such greetings; so I shall only say that last spring, I was so fortunate as to get a reading of it when in the lines of Torres Vedras, and thought I had no inconsiderable right to enter and judge of its beauties, having made one of the party on your first visit to the Trosachs. While the book was in my possession, I had nightly invitations to *evening-parties*, to read and illustrate passages of it; and I must say that (though not conscious of much merit in the way of recitation) my attempts to do justice to the grand opening of the stag-hunt were always followed with bursts of applause, for this canto was the favourite among the rough sons of the Fighting Third Division. At this time, supplies of various kinds, especially anything in the way of delicacies, were very scanty; and in gratitude, I am bound to declare that to the good offices of "the Lady" I owed many a nice slice of ham and rummer of hot punch, which, I assure you, were among the most welcome favours that one officer could bestow upon another, during the long rainy months of last January and February.'

Captain Ferguson, when in command of a small outlying party at Burgos, in 1812, was taken prisoner, and conducted into France. He underwent some hardships on this occasion, but bore a light heart through them all, and even contrived to pay a visit to Paris. He was in an open fiacre in the street, when the word was given to make room for the Emperor, who was about to pass. His charioteer drew up at the side-pavement, and Ferguson prepared to get a view of the great man. He had better, however, have kept out of the way. The eye of Napoleon was caught by something foreign and peculiar in his aspect, and as he slowly passed, he took a keen and suspicious look of the stranger. 'Il vous a fixé,' quoth the driver, as much as to say: 'You are done for.' In brief space, the English prisoner was in the presence of Fouché, chief of the police, who subjected him to a most searching examination. It was only through Napoleon's veneration for the names of his father and granduncle—Joseph Black, the chemist—that his frolic ended without unpleasant consequences.

After the conclusion of the war, Scott felt very anxious to promote the interests of his old friend, and through his exertions mainly, he was appointed keeper of the regalia of Scotland, with a salary, to which George IV. afterwards added knighthood. The affections of Scott are strikingly shewn in Ferguson's history. He was anxious to induce the retired officer to come with his sisters and reside in the neighbourhood of Abbotsford; and the only difficulty was as to a house. At the distance of a couple of miles, there

was a neat small estate, with a mansion upon it, which the laird was disposed to part with; but he asked what was thought a high price—namely, £10,000. According to our recollection of Ferguson's narration, the two friends walked over one Saturday to Toftfield—for so the place was called—and entered into discussion with the laird. After a brief conversation, seeing the proprietor stand firm, Scott agreed to take the estate at the money—a singularly off-hand way of transacting such a piece of business. Ferguson felt real concern, and as they came away said:

'Walter, I'm afraid you've been rather rash here.'

'No, no,' replied Scott, 'don't say a word about it—it will just answer you and the ladies exactly; and what although it be a long price, why I've only to spin a few more of those old stories to make all right.'

So Toftfield, under the new name of Huntly Burn, became the retreat of the old soldier, who from that time was almost daily in the company of his friend, and the confidant of all his literary doings. After a few years, Ferguson married a widow lady, whose niece in time became the wife of Scott's son; a step by which the bonds of the two friends were drawn, if possible, tighter. Sir Adam's cheerful good-nature, his uncommon powers, almost rivalling Scott's own, of telling a story, and his really admirable gift of song, especially in the department of the old merry minstrelsy of Scotland (*Johnie Cope*, for instance, and *Hame cam our Goodman at e'en*), endeared him to the family circle at Abbotsford, and insured his becoming a lasting image in the memory of every visitor. Thomas Moore has left a strong testimony of his enjoyment of Sir Adam's society, his stories, and his Jacobite ditties. Wilkie, in painting the Abbotsford family in one group, put in Ferguson's tall lank figure and droll countenance as a necessary appendage, and it chances to be by far the best part of the picture. It is not to be supposed that any other man of the same amount of talent for humour would have been equally agreeable to Scott, even granting him to have also been a school-companion. The humour of Ferguson was of the same Scottish type with Scott's own; and all his ideas and stories had that smack of Scottish association which Sir Walter so intensely relished. Here lay the charm. It was a charm quite peculiar, and which none but a Scotsman, and one of somewhat old fashion, can entirely appreciate. To the Great Magician of the Border, it was one-half of the very salt of life.

On trying to recall some of the many stories which Sir Adam used to tell, we feel how impossible it is to communicate in writing any beyond the most inconsiderable portion of the effect which he gave them, so much were they indebted to voice, look, and shades of diction far too nice to bear transcription. Yet, in the hope of the reader's making large allowances, we shall make an attempt to arrest a few of them.

Many years before the conclusion of the last century, Dr Ferguson travelled one day from London to Richmond in a stage-coach, which at first contained no other passengers than a hale-looking old clergyman, of voluminous figure, and with a red face and gurgling unctuous voice. As they went along, they received an addition to the company, in the form of a small prim old lady, with a very sharp perking voice, and who appeared to be a friend of the old clergyman.

'I hope, doctor, I see you well,' quoth the small prim lady with the sharp perking voice.

'I can't complain,' responded the heavy fat voice, self-complacently.

'Have you met many turkeys and chines this Christmas, doctor?' inquired the peaky voice.

'A good many—a good many,' were the few but expressive words of the other, like so many blobs in boiling tallow.

It was from this little bit of character that Scott conceived the idea of Dr Redgill in *St Ronan's Well*.



Dr Adam Ferguson, while devotedly attached to Dr Robertson, and a great admirer of his works, found reason to complain of the manner in which he conducted himself in private society, particularly at dinner-parties. It was the worthy principal's custom, as soon as the cloth had been removed, to settle himself in his chair, and throwing out a subject, commence lecturing upon it, to the destruction of conversation, and the no small weariness of the company. By way of giving him a check, Dr Ferguson took his friend, Dr Carlyle of Inveresk, into counsel; and it was speedily arranged between them, that, immediately after dinner, Dr Carlyle should anticipate the ordinary lecture of Dr Robertson, by commencing a long tirade, in an enthusiastic manner, on the virtues of an article then in the course of being puffed in newspaper advertisements—namely, patent mustard. Ferguson, in the mean time, had a private conversation with the principal, in which he took occasion to remark, that he had lately begun to fear there was something wrong with Carlyle's mind: he was getting so addicted to speak loudly in praise of trivial things—for example, he was unable for the present to converse about anything but patent mustard! Robertson expressed his concern for the case, but hoped it was only a passing whim. The dinner-party accordingly assembled at Dr Ferguson's, and Robertson was about to commence as usual with one of his long-winded formal palavers, when all at once Dr Carlyle broke in: 'This was,' he said, 'an age most notable for its inventions and discoveries. Human ingenuity was exerted on the noblest and the meanest things, and often with the most admirable effects on the meanest. There was, for instance, an article of a humble kind which had lately been wonderfully improved by a particular mode of preparation, and he, for his part, was inclined to say, that *patent mustard* was the thing above all others which gave a distinguishing glory to this age. In the first place'—It is needless, however, to pursue his discourse further. Suffice it, that Dr Robertson sat paralysed, and could not afterwards during the whole night muster power or spirits to utter more than an occasional sentence.

Mr John Home, author of the tragedy of *Douglas*, was an intimate friend of Dr Ferguson, and of him, accordingly, Sir Adam had many reminiscences. When the poet lived in North Hanover Street, Edinburgh, he one day entertained at lunch the Lady Randolph of her day, the celebrated Mrs Siddons. She was asked what she would have to drink, and happened to mention 'a little porter.' 'John,' said Mr Home to his serving-man, 'you'll get Mrs Siddons a little porter.' Then the conversation went on as usual, John having meanwhile disappeared from the room.

'My dear, where is John? I want a slice of bread. I really think this young man will not suit us, my dear—he's so very stupid.'

After some fretting about John, the delinquent suddenly came in, followed by a stout short Highlander from the street, with a baldrick of ropes over his shoulder, and a leaden badge on his breast.

'John, where have you been? You've been much wanted—why did you leave the room? I'm very angry with you!'

'Oh, sir,' quoth John, 'I've been out to get the little porter for the lady, and here's the *very least* one I could find on the stand.'

The mistake, the aspect of the little porter undoing his ropes, as for a job, at the door, and the puzzlement of the ancient host and his wife, were too much for Mrs Siddons, who went off into perfect shouts of laughter, and scarcely recovered tranquillity for half an hour.

Early in this century, an enthusiastic Englishman made a pilgrimage to Edinburgh, for little other reason than to see the author of the tragedy of *Douglas*. He

made his way to Mr Home's house, but learned at the door, to his great dismay, that the object of his idolatry had gone on a jaunt to the Highlands. 'But ye may see Mrs Home, maybe,' said the serving-man, in pity for his evident distress. He caught at the idea, sent in his card, and was admitted to the presence of a very plain, old invalid lady, who sat wrapped up in flannel, and was very deaf. The visitor conversed with her as well as her deficient hearing permitted, and felt a good deal disenchanted. They came upon the subject of the recent Peace of Amiens.

'It will do a great deal of good, ma'am, to the country.'

'I daursay it will.'

'Oh yes, ma'am; we shall now have most foreign things cheaper, because commerce will not be interrupted.'

'Div ye think it'll mak' ony difference in the price o' *nittugs*?' said the poet's wife, referring to the only article which now affected her comfort greatly.

The pilgrim could bear no more, but rushed from the house, and is supposed to have that night departed by mail for the south, quite cured of his extravagant feelings regarding the creator of Young Norval.

We had the pleasure, a few years ago, of accompanying Sir Adam on an excursion in Peeblesshire, being the last visit he ever paid to that district, where he had spent many youthful years. It was most delightful to hear his racy recollections of the men and things there sixty years back; and in particular, to survey with him the old manor-house at Hallyards, and listen to what he had to tell of almost every room in it, and every marked spot in its neighbourhood, in connection with some distinguished name, or some interesting occurrence. It is to be remarked, that Dr Ferguson's first residence in Peeblesshire was at Neidpath Castle, which was then just about to fall into its present half-ruinous state. On settling there, he told his family that it was his desire that any of the respectable people of the neighbourhood who called should be received with the utmost civility, so that they might remain on pleasant terms with all around them. Ere many days had elapsed, a neatly dressed gentleman-like little man was shewn into Dr Ferguson's own room, and entered easily into miscellaneous conversation. The bell for their early family-dinner ringing at the time, the courteous professor invited his visitor to join the family in the dining-room, which he readily consented to do. The family, remembering their father's injunction, of course received the unknown with all possible distinction, and a very lively conversation ensued. Dr Ferguson, however, expressed his concern to see that his guest was eating very little—indeed, only making an appearance of eating—and he confessed his regret that they had so little variety of fare to offer him.

'Oh, doctor,' said the stranger, 'never mind me: the fact is, on *killing-days* I scarcely ever have any appetite.'

Not small was the surprise, but much greater the amusement of the family, on discovering that he of the stingy appetite was Robert Smith, the Peebles butcher, and that the object of the visit was merely to bespeak Dr Ferguson's custom!

Hallyards, to which they afterwards went, was a much more out-of-the-way place, where they had scarcely any conversable neighbour but the minister. One day, young Adam came unexpectedly from Edinburgh, and found only a couple of his sisters at home. On pushing a reconnaissance (one of our friend's favourite phrases) into the larder, he discovered that the available materials of dinner were of a very meagre character—only a *pickle* trout and a *whoon* craws. Things looked decidedly melancholy, when, to the agreeable surprise of all, a leg of mutton was handed in by a butcher's boy from the town. It looked like a special gift of Providence; but the human means, they had no doubt, was an order of their father, now out on one of his long rambles. Under the care of

Miss Bell, i.e., Isabella, who acted as housekeeper, the mutton was right soon revolving before the kitchen-fire. In the midst of their pleasing anticipations, in came Archy Tod, the minister's man.

'Has there been ony thing heard here o' a leg o' mutton?'

'Oh, ay,' said Miss Bell; 'one came here a little ago, and it's now preparing for dinner. Was the minister expecting such a thing?'

'Ay, he was expectin't, and there's to be folk wi' him the day to eat it.'

The lady at once saw how matters stood, and gave up the prize with the best grace she could. Archy was soon seen striding down the water-side to the manse, with the spit bearing the meat over his shoulder!

One of the young ladies, who used to amuse herself with verse-making, next day produced a song to the old tune of the *Mucking of Geordie's Byre*; of which Sir Adam could remember one verse—

'Twas never my father's intention,  
Nor yet Miss Bell's desire,  
That ever the minister's mutton  
Should be put to the Ha'yards fire!

Sir Adam had fewer anecdotes of Scott than one would have expected; nor were they in general of a remarkable kind. One occurrence, which put himself into a ludicrous light, happened when Sir Humphry Davy came on a visit to Abbotsford. Ferguson having heard that Scott was out in the fields with a visitor, and having concluded, from some circumstances, that the stranger was his old naval acquaintance Lord John Hay, went out in search of them, and coming up in view on one side of the Rhymer's Glen, while they were at the distance of a quarter of a mile on the other, immediately began to pipe out a tissue of nautical phrases, with appropriate gesticulations, by way of a comical hail to his friend. Scott stared at him, in apprehension of his having suddenly gone mad; and as for the philosopher, who had never seen the merry knight before, he had no doubt on the point whatever. The affair stood a good deal of laughing that evening after dinner.

Scott was never wanting in something pleasant to say, even on the most trivial occasions. Calling one day at Huntly Burn, soon after the settlement of his friend in that house, and observing a fine honeysuckle in full blossom over the door, he congratulated Miss Ferguson on its appearance. She remarked that it was the kind called trumpet honeysuckle, from the form of the flower. 'Weel,' said Scott, 'ye'll never come out o' your ain door without a flourish o' trumpets.'

On a gusty autumn day, Scott and Ferguson went out a-coursing over the high grounds above Galashiels, and were like to be blown off their ponies. Coming to a lonely farmhouse, in a very exposed situation, they tapped at the door, but could get no admission. Hearing at length a female voice within, Sir Adam called out:

'What's come o' a' the men?'

'Ou, they're a' awa' o're to Windydoors [a real place so named].'

'I think they might ha'e been content wi' their ain doors to-day,' said Scott in his quiet droll way, as he turned his pony's head.

Scott's friend survived him upwards of twenty-two years, and remained in tolerable health and vigour within a few weeks of his death. Till struck with his mortal illness, he could enter into any cheerful scene, and even into the amusements of young people, with all his original sprightliness and his endless powers of pleasing. One cannot well doubt that this sunniness of disposition had something to do with his attaining the age of eighty-four in such good condition of body.

Now he has gone, all who knew him must feel that he leaves a great blank; for where can now be found any one to talk of Hume, Smith, and Robertson from personal association, or to express so well the characteristic humour of old Scotland in song and in story?

## INDIA AT HOME.

On the 20th of January 1854, the longest ship in the world, the *Himalaya*, left Southampton Dock for Alexandria; and we are further told by the journalist, that L.140 was obtained, and devoted to a charitable purpose, by sixpenny-admissions to view this mountain upon English waves.

One is always glad to see curiosity at work in a healthy way; because from infancy to age—from the child who breaks its toy to see what it contains, to the elder who is tempted into a lecture-room of the Polytechnic to hear Dr Bachhoffner talk pleasantly about the new electric-telegraph—increased knowledge is the result. People now begin to acknowledge that perhaps, on the whole, information is a good thing; and in this spirit we would be glad to see curiosity carried a little further—as, for instance, in this case of the *Himalaya*—and that some few, who paid their sixpences to see 'the longest ship in the world,' had been disposed to ask what sort of land that was, on the half-way ocean-track, to which that long ship was about to transfer so many of our countrymen.

We don't affect tables—numerical tables, we mean. They seem mere turning-tables to us, that we grow giddy in contemplation of. We won't talk of dates, commercial treaties, and other antique horrors, as painful to think of as that dreadful mechanical tiger at the India House, which, somehow or other, seems always to mix itself up with our earliest Asiatic notions. These things have passed away—we wish the tiger had done so too—and, meanwhile, India has come home to us; steam-power has annihilated time and space. We go from Southampton to Bombay, the capital of Western India, as speedily as from London to Chamouni; and if the land of palms and mango-groves be so near us in time, surely also it should draw nearer to our hearts and consciences.

As to our hearts, the matter is a marvel. Scarcely a family in the United Kingdom that has not parted with some young member of it, anxious to pluck the fruit of that fabled tree, said to bloom with gold mohurs for the benefit of cadets and writers, as the obliging tree of the Koran does with winter and summer dresses for true believers. And yet, who cared about the sunny land to which the young adventurers passed? A general idea prevailed, and does still prevail, that India is hot, and its people brown; that the Europeans are carried about in boxes on men's shoulders; that when Charles or Harry dines, he eats curry, and drinks pale ale; that tiffin is the Indian word for luncheon; that thatched houses are called bungalows; and that our friends abroad don't send home half as many fans and shawls as we expected. Here the popular idea of India ends. We appeal to the reader's truthfulness: were he waiting, now say, in a dentist's consulting-room, and the only means of mental recreation lay between a work on India and the *Supplement of the Times*, would he not choose the *Supplement*? He would read, for the hundredth time, of the Earthmen or the Esquimaux, of portable brick-houses, of the Camberwell Scientific Institution—of anything but India. How strange it is! and yet with morbid sympathy we give a copper coin to a runaway Lascar sweeper, that we could not take the trouble to bestow on the poor, shivering, famine-pinched urchin, cast forth from the unspeakable miseries of a neighbouring lane. Here, however, is consistency; for, as Exeter Hall may bear witness, English benevolence is essentially telescopic. As photographic pictures seem

to gain attractive beauty of detail by being magnified on several thousand feet of canvas, so human misery becomes attractive when well managed by a skilful artist, and we see its details at a distance, without chance of disgust to our senses or suffering to our health. By this means we are often deceived, commonly commit injustice, generally obtain wrong impressions. It may matter more or less according to the character of the subject demanding our sympathy; but we do hold that no subject is more worthy of our inquiry and sympathy than the characteristics and condition of that country and its people, to which, year by year, and month by month, so many from among us go forth to spend the most energetic period of their lives. The *Himalaya* carried out eighty-two passengers, to be landed at the several presidencies of Madras, Calcutta, and Bombay. Some in the military, some in the civil services, and this but a bi-monthly freight of human beings. All seemed to have friends to part from; many, parents; some, trials yet more bitter to endure. Still, how many of those who, when the bell rang and the band played, with uncertain step, moistened eye, and trembling hand, made their way back to the flagstones of the Dock, thought of India, of how it was 'at home' with us, or what were our duties there?

We know that there is a solemn-looking building in Leadenhall Street that is, in a mystical and legendary way, somehow connected with India being kept in order; and if we wanted a provision for a nephew or a son, we may have seen the man in the cocked-hat, who has charge of the slate behind the door—the record of the exits and entrances of the directors—and we may have heard that it is 'a court-day,' as it always is when one wants anything; and so we may have come away with a vague idea that India *had* a government, and that this government was, somehow or other, connected with a very dismal vestibule, a man in a cocked-hat, and a slate. What that government is, what its acts have been, or how it works in producing justice or content among the governed, nobody is so eccentric as to inquire. There are people, too, called 'proprietors of East India Stock,' a list of whom may be seen in a sort of pamphlet—our own copy, covered in curry-coloured paper, possibly in compliment to the enclosed; but who, of these four, three, two, or one voters ever consider it necessary to appear in a court, or study the condition of India, that they may cast their votes on the side of justice? If the subject goes further—if some trustful, simple-minded man rises in the House of Commons to speak of India, the members feel an immediate demand of their physical nature for sherry and cutlets, and depart to seek them at their clubs. An energetic artist, seeing how dioramas are 'using up' the European and American world, sets his palette for the hot colouring of India; but the public find that it is the moon-risings, the hydro-oxygen effects of light, the dissolving-views, they are interested in, not *India*. At the great Industrial Exhibition of '51, there was an Indian department: much gold, much ivory, rich embroideries of cunning work. People looked at them, and were sensible of a strong scent of sandal-wood; but who cared to inquire where all this had been produced, when, or under what circumstances? Who cared to know the fact, that for hundreds of years India has been retrograding in its arts for want of fostering influence? That looms, once capable of producing fabrics the most delicate, are succeeded by those manufacturing materials of the coarsest kind? That the power yet remaining is confined to one or two cities on the north-west frontier of India, where art is yet fostered by Mohammedan expenditure; and that much we saw is not the produce of India at all, but of China and Central Asia?

And there were strange little models, too, of Indian peasantry; queer, ill-proportioned statuettes of clay;

a man in a turban, riding on a rope, and driving a pair of humpbacked cattle. Who cared to know that this absurd effigy represented the agricultural peasant of the highlands of Western India? Or that, under the rule of the Mahratta native princes of his land, he brought his little buffaloes to work over a smooth good road, and sang at his labour a charming pastoral song, not yet quite forgotten; and that now his bullocks get crippled over the rocky ways, and his voice is sad, and his family very poor; and that he has abandoned his little bit of land, because the English collector levies such heavy taxes, and he was so much impoverished by the last famine—who cares for all this, or feels that English people *ought* to be interested, and *are* responsible for the condition of the population of a vast empire, from which our sons and brothers hope to bring fortunes to spend at home? And why should not these sons and brothers come home a little oftener? Would India be worse governed because her young civilians refreshed their minds with practical political experience in Europe; or her young soldiers be worse tacticians for an occasional 'field-day' at home? We think not; and we hope that one good result of the sixpenny-admissions to the *Himalaya* may be to suggest more strongly, that the institution of a furlough, after ten years' service, is altogether out of character with the times we live in, and should become an idea obsolete with that of the old 'tea-wagons,' as the good, tedious, fortune-making China traders were called in the olden time. Half a century ago, this point was pressed by writers on India—men in advance of their day. It was urged on moral and political grounds, the facility of intercourse not then existing. Now, even for years, this last difficulty has been removed; and yet the heart of the overworked, climate-stricken servant of the Indian government yearns still in vain for the enactment which may enable him again to see his native shores, and the 'old familiar faces,' without a sacrifice of that which he has passed years of exile to secure.

One of the marked characteristics of the day, is a tendency to shake the dry bones of antiquity, and see to what class they belong. We believe, that in all ages the world had good in it; but presume that the less men mixed with each other, or found out what materials the human family were composed of, and the less sympathy they felt, the less good there was. We all see a great deal of each other in these times, and good daily rises out of it. Our respect is certainly weakened towards our ancestors, and we even question the prejudices bequeathed to us as facts. A little child has now its doubts of the heroic character of 'the Lion-hearted King,' and is disposed to consider him as only a better kind of savage, with most of the virtues of barbarians left out of the account; and that little child is in the way of wisdom if, with his growth, he goes not too far, nor casts out truth, because he has found falsehood.

Now the old notion about India has been, that ours is a paternal government, and our empire is one of opinion. One is afraid of being tiresome in mentioning the times of Clive, Monro, and Hastings—the tiger is on the foreground at once—but this idea was promulgated in their day, and people have not been at the trouble to replace it with a truer. Warren Hastings was told to hold India; so he, in his paternal way, imprisoned princes, hanged priests, seized family estates, robbed princesses, and carried out his instructions. Then he made paternal treaties. The Indian princes were taught to see their value in a protective and commercial sense. It happened now and then that the working of the system was not wholly satisfactory to the protected; and somehow or other the treaty seemed getting obsolete to the protectors. Remonstrance was resorted to by the weak; and to prevent the chance of their progressing to their own injury, we, in our



paternal way, took possession of their country, and afforded residences to the rulers in salubrious hill-forts, healthier than their own cities in the plains. Then, in a lesser way, when a poor peasant holding a village, bestowed on his ancestor for some good deed, was obliged to sell it, to prevent its getting into unworthy hands, the government always bought it; at a very low price, it is true, because no bidders arose; still there could be no doubt of the value of such paternal protection. Amidst all this, we have satisfied our consciences by sending out missionaries, to convince all men of the superiority of the professed religion of the governing power. All these persons have zeal; we hope all of them have honesty. But zeal and honesty are not enough without knowledge. A class of young men, natives of India, are to be met with by these missionaries, who are learned mathematicians, subtle metaphysicians, well skilled in logic; not altogether firm in the old faiths, but willing to test all. They will sound the depths, however, with their own plumb-line; and the half-educated missionary, knowing little of the history or opinions of the people he has come amongst, of their mental working, or of their prejudices of caste; unable to cope with them in argument, or to render himself comprehensible in a new and very difficult language, falls back upon that class who in every country are to be found—having all to gain, and nothing to lose by a change of opinion—and anon sounds forth a very imposing list of converts from the platforms of believing England.

From time to time we fall back upon that rusty old prop of 'expediences;' better than nothing, as we should fall ourselves to the ground without it. Expediency, however, in the sense in which it has been used, won't serve us much longer; but expediency, as a new idea, is perhaps the best that we can act upon.

A great central power is now fusing, as it were, the hitherto unmanageable materials of Indian social life. The people are thinking for themselves; working for themselves. They are beginning to inquire what they were in religion, in science, in literature, in art, in manufacture, in social independence, and to ask why they are no longer thus. They begin to doubt our paternal honesty. Our empire of opinion is a mere dissolving view. Every Indian mail brings home some petition against justicial courts, or insupportable interference in the arrangement of family affairs. We have 'India at home' now, in the shape of representatives of the three great classes of Indian society, all appealing against the decisions of paternity. In certain of our higher social circles, may be met a Hindoo prince, a Mohammedan noble, and Parsee merchants of wealth and distinction. We admire their turbans, and wonder at the magnificent costliness of their gold-embroidered robes; but few care to inquire why the head aches under the turban, or the heart throbs under the robe. Not our military force, nor our empire of opinion, but the divisions of these three classes of social life in India have hitherto really been our strength: soon common interest will make common cause.

It is time to recognise the new spirit—to inquire what India is, in her intelligence and her wants—to get rid of the old ideas of elephants and rajahs, and consider it as a mighty empire in the throes of a new mental and social existence, full of materials for thought, and possessed of a rapidly growing internal power. It is time to shew sympathy for the people of a land now drawn so near to our shores by modern science; to acquaint ourselves with their habits of thought and general condition; and to lead them to trust our good faith, as the result of knowledge, rather than tempt them to try newer alliances.

We do think that we should be wise to awake from our lethargy as affects India; that, though late, we might venture to be just—might venture to shew political and social sympathy to her people; and by our

acts abroad and at home, prove that we did not so much desire to drain the treasures of a mighty empire, as to recognise its internal powers, foster its half-forgotten learning, and cherish its awakening sense of universal rights. The heart of India will then be ours, and the artisan of England, learning from, and in his turn teaching, the craftsman of the East, will in exchange for his sixpences, paid to see many succeeding nautical wonders in advance of the *Himalaya*, acquire extended views and an enlarged sympathy worth many sixpences; for the increased love of his race will make him a wiser and a better man.

## M A R E T I M O.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## TORRE DEI GIGANTI.

FOLLOWING such of our friends as have been engaged in active adventure, we have for some time been compelled to leave poor Angela uncared for, in custody of the Black Band. It was easier, too, to tell of manly exertion, bold deeds, and persevering endeavour—of the explosion of hoarded vengeance, the intrigues of mean souls, and the counter-intrigues of the beautiful and the good—than to record how that sweet lady battled in her own heart with despair, and every day found herself purer and stronger—more fitted to welcome good-fortune, and better prepared to meet disaster, if such were the will of Heaven. Much of what tradition ventures to say on this score, is no doubt poetical interpretation. Bianca would have related her mental conflicts in words of fire, which might have circulated through every household in the island; but Angela suffered, with the silent patience of a domestic woman, who veils both her home joys and her home sorrows from the public gaze. We have no genuine materials, therefore, for the history of her heart during her captivity, though the sentiments attributed to her are no doubt in accordance with nature when developed in its greatest purity.

Mr Buck used often, in after-years, to relate the circumstances of that time of suffering, mingling therewith some humorous touches now and then when he thought he was becoming improperly sentimental. The position, indeed, appeared to him after a few days of custom, when fear wore off, rather comic than otherwise.

'I never felt my nothingness so keenly,' he would say. 'The black villains—black in heart as in name—would persist in looking upon me as a lady's-maid. They even called me *Miss*—one of the rascals being erudite enough to know that one word of English. I did not mind them, for I was certainly a comfort to the poor lady—Heaven bless her! Every evening they locked her in the hut with that horrid minx, Jeppo's daughter, whom they styled Lotta, for Carlotta, I suppose; whilst I was stowed away in a hole in the rock, a sort of dog-kennel, closed up by a great barrel, against which one of the Black Guards—Mr Buck intended this as a pun—'leaned his brawny back as he slept. I once tried to steal away, quite in fun, for I would not have left the lady for the world; but a ruffian grabbed me by the ankle—I was lame for a day after—and shewed me a knife with a horrid broad blade, the broadest I have ever seen. In the morning, they let me out, saying, with mincing accents: "Miss, your lady wants you!" Confound them! I had nearly a month's beard on; my chin was like a hedgehog. The fact was, that poor Madame di Falco, who hated Lotta as much as she could hate anything, was never comfortable but when I was present. Every evening she cried when I went away, and I had to thrust my fist into my eye, to prevent my crying too; but it really warmed my heart to see the smile with which she greeted me in the morning. That was the only

time she ever looked cheerful, for we at once began to talk; and it was of no use my trying to tell stories of Pompeii, and Herculaneum, and Vesuvius, and so forth; not a bit. The burden was ever—Paolo and Walter, Paolo and Bianca, Paolo and her father.

'Our life, however, was not unchecked by excitement. In the first place, Jeppo's conduct was from the outset very mysterious. He would come to the door of the hut, and ask permission to enter, quite in a gentlemanly way; whereas the others would thrust their heads in without ceremony, and although they avoided speaking to Angela, involuntarily respecting her, would nod and grin at me, and call me Miss. He would sit long in silence, looking at his prisoner; then he would give some message from Bianca, or else say in an abrupt manner: "The puppet-show goes wrong—they have pulled the wrong string." This made me think him mad, and I told him so one day in the civilised manner possible. "Bah!" said he; "half the absurd sights we see in this life may be explained in that way. The wrong string is pulled. What a wonderful change could be made if the right string could be put in the right hand!" "In Heaven's name," cried I, "do so at once if you can! We are dismal puppets now. Perhaps you can change this tragedy into a comedy." "Not exactly," replied he; "comedy and life are different things: the scale goes up on one side, and down on the other. Laughter is compensated by tears." He appeared to me a very enigmatical gentleman, and I was grieved to notice that I had incurred his contempt. He never deigned to speak in a clear manner to me; but sometimes Angela would look mildly at him—so mildly, that I thought she would draw him down on his knees—and say, calling him by his name, quite softly and winningly: "Jeppo, if you know anything that will do us any good, I pray you tell it, and my prayers shall reward you." Then the old bandit would seem troubled, and often remain silent, but sometimes replied to this effect: "The secret burns within me, and it must come out sooner or later. I am working in the dark. Do not question me; perhaps I am now doing you good."

Here Mr Buck would digress a good deal; but he always came back to the point at last, and related in detail all the little incidents that diversified the captivity of himself and Angela up to the fourth of June. Half of the Black Band constantly remained lounging about the neighbourhood of the hut, whilst the remainder were dispersed through the country as scouts and spies. Two or three times an alarm was raised of the approach of soldiers, and a small troop of dragoons did appear, indeed, on one occasion, riding along the banks of the stream below. They had, however, only misunderstood orders, and passed without being aware of the vicinity of the Black Band. From various sources it became known that many, if not most, of the passes leading into the interior of Sicily had been reconnoitred by patrols; but as they rode away again, they did not appear very dangerous. The banditti knew that if a serious attempt to capture them were made, it would probably succeed. Many of the peasantry in the neighbourhood, and all the charcoal-burners of the forest, were aware of their position, and though popular opinion was rather favourable to them than otherwise, a traitor was certain to be found. But they had generally been accustomed to impunity, and took little pains to conceal their presence when in possession of a hostage. The fact that after an attack had been planned, and publicly talked of, it should be postponed so long, made them insolent and confident. The delay in giving a definite answer to their pretensions, seemed also easy of explanation. They had often kept prisoners a month waiting for the ransom to be collected; now they had asked, in addition to a sum of money to be paid them as a private transaction, an

amnesty for all past crimes. The viceroy had answered through Haj-Ahmed, that so serious a request must of necessity be submitted to the government at Naples; and scrupled not to say that this was a mere matter of form, for that whatever he recommended would be carried out. Had they been wise, this extreme condescension, contrasting with the sinister rumours that now and then reached them, would have appeared of ill augury; but they could hardly believe that the depositary of constituted authority could be less respectful of faith than themselves. Besides, they were now compelled to play the game to the last card; escape, as we have said, was difficult, if not impossible, should their capture be resolved on; and the only rampart which they could really trust, was their hostage. We need not be surprised, therefore, if they watched her with the most jealous care; so that Mr Buck was persuaded that any attempt at escape or rescue must prove fatal to her. In this mood of mind he waited patiently for events; now and then, it is true, breaking out into peevish complaint, that an honest English gentleman, born within sound of Bow Bells, should be kept in perpetual fear, not only of his own life, but of that of the sweetest, gentlest, most beautiful lady he had ever seen, for whose sake he consented to undergo the greatest possible privations, and even to answer to the degrading name of *Miss*.

When Haj-Ahmed obtained information of the treacherous manner in which the government intended to act, he did not tell the Black Band all he knew; because, as we have seen from his interview with Bianca, he had by this time begun to understand that he was compromised with the losing party, and thought of nothing but making his own house safe. However, he told Jeppo privately to be on his guard, alluding to vague reports, and pretending rather to be suspicious than positively certain. The bandit chief, on his part, was determined not to allow any violence to be exercised against Angela, but at the same time never contemplated betraying his own comrades. What he wished, it would seem, was to bring this adventure to a termination as peaceably as possible, and then to quit that kind of life; for which his age, and an almost involuntary return to better sentiments, incapacitated him. On the morning of the fifth of June, having well pondered on his position, without giving his men reason to suppose that he had fresh cause of alarm, he resolved to shift his quarters. Angela and Mr Buck were in the hut together, talking as usual, when Lotta came in and said:

'All is ready. Come at once.'

The two prisoners at first imagined that they were about to be restored to liberty, and followed the girl out upon the platform; but they soon understood that the Band was about to march. Four or five mules, laden with baggage, were at the entrance of the defile leading through the mountain; half a dozen of the men were on horseback, and the others on foot; all were armed to the teeth, but seemed sombre and downcast. A couple of mules were ready for Lotta and Angela; and Jeppo himself was mounted on a powerful black horse.

'We must be moving,' said he gloomily. 'Signor Buck, assist the lady to mount. Fear nothing, signora; there is no reason why your cheeks should pale. Well, you are ready. On, my men, and look sharply round, for we may see sights when we come to the trees.'

The mounted men went first; then followed the mules; then the two prisoners, Mr Buck on foot; and Jeppo, with the remainder of the Band, brought up the rear. They descended the defile until they reached the plain, and then turning southward, soon entered a forest principally of ilex-trees, which covered a hilly country, even on that bright day, with an almost impenetrable shade. Mr Buck tried several times to ascertain from



Jeppo whither they were going, and what was the reason of this sudden move; but he either received no answer at all, or answers so vague, that they left him as wise as ever. He therefore relapsed into silence, and faithfully kept at Angela's stirrup, cheering her by his looks.

The wife of Di Falco, we must not forget to mention, had by this time abandoned her boy's attire, and was dressed in the striped gown of a Sicilian peasant-girl, over which she threw the *saya* which she had procured from Katerina. She laid great stress on this change in her appearance; and maintained that it formed her excuse for no longer exhibiting that cheerful courage which had distinguished her while she was under Walter's care. Then she had made it a point of honour to have, as far as her delicate shape and slender figure would allow, what Rosalind calls 'a swashing and a martial outside.' Now she claimed a right to all the timidity of her sex, and felt bound to contribute nothing but prayers and resignation to the success of her cause.

After about two hours' march, the party emerged from the forest, and came to the foot of a range of hills, rising gradually towards a lofty mountain with a rugged summit, around which the bright rays of the sun seemed to glitter as around a steeple-tower. They approached it along a defile, here and there made cheerful by trees, which hung over the now dried-up bed of a winter torrent; by degrees the path became steep and winding, and the horsemen were compelled to dismount and scramble up, driving their animals before them. Presently they reached the summit, which proved in reality to be a flat table-land, covered with the ruins of some old fortified town, of the fortunes of which even tradition does not pretend to know anything. The people called the place *Torre dei Giganti*, or simply, *I Giganti*. Near the centre of the ruins, indeed, rose a huge square tower, four stories of which appeared still from without to be perfect, whilst the remains of a fifth window at top, told that formerly the pile had been raised still higher.

The first care of Jeppo was to place a couple of sentinels in commanding positions; and then, having himself assisted Angela to dismount, he bade the prisoners follow him through a court, covered with huge blocks of stone, towards the tower.

'Here,' said he, when they had entered the vast yawning portal, 'is the guard-house; and above,' he added, trying to smile, 'is your dungeon.'

The lower chamber was like a cave, for there were no windows; but a staircase in the massive wall led to a large room in complete preservation, though quite bare, with look-outs to the four quarters of the heavens.

'Here,' proceeded Jeppo, the others being too depressed to speak, 'one might live comfortably, if one had hope. The roof will keep out all the rain-floods that can visit this island. Above, you may walk when you are weary, for the staircase goes to the top, and a sort of terrace is left. I have often thought,' he added, looking significantly at Mr Buck, 'that a brave man, with a sacred charge confided to him, might defend himself in the ruined room overhead, where there are plenty of loose stones, for an hour or so against any attack— But you will never have occasion to try.'

So saying, he left them abruptly.

'He meant something by that,' murmured Angela.

'Perhaps so,' quoth her companion. 'Let us, therefore, study the geography of this place. We have nothing else to do.'

They went up the staircase, which was in part ruined, so that Mr Buck had to give his hand to Angela more than once. Above, they found a similar room to the one they had quitted, except that a portion of the ceiling was broken in, so that they could see up through the other stories of the tower to the blue sky.

The next flight of stairs led them, after much trouble, not to the third story, but to the very summit of the building, where, hanging as it were from the corner, was an open paved terrace or balcony, a few feet square.

'No doubt,' quoth Mr Buck, who was beginning to get up a little antiquarian excitement, 'this was of old the lady's bower, as they call it in romance. What a splendid view! The horizon seems boundless. Forest and hill and plain; why, if we were in the proper mood, we could spend hours gazing out. Look, there is a village not more than two miles off. This is the time to wish to be a little bird.'

Angela tried to smile at her companion's liveliness; but she was thinking of the new difficulties in which this change of position had placed them.

'I begin to doubt Jeppo,' said she. 'Why has he taken us here? It will be impossible for any friend to come near without being seen.'

'That is true,' quoth Mr Buck; 'but you heard what he said to me; and I swear—he was as good as his word—that Mr Joseph Buck is that very man he spoke of. If there be a sign of rescue, not a black villain of them all shall come up these stairs with his brains in his head.'

To illustrate his meaning, he seized a huge stone, and quoited it down. A scream came from below.

'What are you doing?' cried the shrill angry voice of Lotta. 'Do you want to kill me?'

'No, love,' quoth Mr Buck, making a comic grimace at Angela; 'but my foot slipped.'

We must now leave the prisoners, and skipping a couple of days, return on the evening of the seventh day of the month to the inlet of *Sferacavallo*. A smart wind was blowing from the west, and two or three boats under full sail were coming in, looking vague and shadowy in the twilight. On the shore, out of sight of the village we have already mentioned, at the entrance of a narrow barren defile, a number of horsemen, who had just ridden down, were looking anxiously out. Among them appeared *Andrea Castelnouve*, who, with two or three others, was elegantly dressed, but fully armed with guns, swords, and pistols. The others were more roughly attired; and had they not been in such good company, some doubts might have been awakened as to their honesty in the mind of any quiet citizen who should have met them in that place at such an hour. However, we have no call to examine into their morality. Those who know the internal history of Sicily during the last thirty years, will remember that in the hope, so often disappointed, that the people could be roused to a serious struggle for constitutional liberty, many youths of all classes, from the town and from the country—urged by motives sometimes purely patriotic, sometimes of ambition, sometimes merely acting from love of adventure—had banded together, and tied themselves by solemn oaths to seize on every opportunity to annoy the representatives of Naples when they could not injure them; and thus to keep up by the contagious effect of example a spirit of discontent and opposition, which might one day serve their grand object. It is needless, however, to insist further on their general character. We must at anyrate be content thus to hint how it was possible to collect together a party sufficiently careless of law, and yet sufficiently respectable in motives, to do the rough service necessary on this occasion. All waited with impatience for the arrival of *Luigi Spada*, being led by their dispositions, as well as their engagements, to act implicitly on his advice. *Andrea* had prepared them for an attack on the *Black Band*; but, as he had foreseen, they would not undertake anything without the concurrence of their accustomed leader.

'The villagers are nearly all housed already,' said *Andrea*, 'and no one seems to come our way.'

'Who cares?' quoth one of the roughest looking of the party. 'There are not more than five soldiers on guard here, and the sight of a dozen patriots would keep five times the number within doors.'

'That felucca has shewn a light,' exclaimed another. 'Look out for the second and the third.'

It was not quite dark, although the twilight was nearly over; but a lantern was hung twice more over the bows of the largest boat, and the patriots were quite certain that their friends were at hand. One of them dismounted, and ran along the sandy point at the entrance of the inlet; the felucca glided in, furling its sails; he shouted, and they ran directly on shore. In another moment Paolo, for the first time for a whole year, leaped upon the Sicilian soil. Walter, and Luigi, and Julio, and the whole crew followed.

'We must abandon our prize, boys,' cried Giacomo. 'This is not a craft for men of our stamp, and the owners will not have forgotten her features. We are land-animals for the present.'

When the crew of the boat had joined the party of patriots, the whole number amounted to twenty-five. The task, therefore, which they had undertaken appeared easy, and all eagerly agreed to co-operate. It was only by degrees, however, that Andrea could explain his plans. Paolo—who seemed drunk with excitement and anxiety, although he had learned from the marchese long before, and more fully from Walter during their voyage, the unhappy position of Angela—constantly interrupted him with questions; and when at length the plan proposed by Haj-Ahmed was fully explained, wished to march at once.

During the two days which had elapsed since Angela had been removed to the ruined castle, Haj-Ahmed had not been idle. He had contrived to have an interview with Jeppo alone; and although he did not dare to propose a distinct plan of treachery, had sounded the dispositions of that rugged and half-repentant bandit. But the principles of a code with which he was unacquainted, warred with his schemes. Jeppo, as we know, abhorred the savage resolve of his men to shelter themselves behind their hostage, and to make her answer, even with her life, for their safety; but he had not given up all hope that matters might be more peaceably arranged, and could not bring his mind to believe that he was bound to sacrifice his own comrades, whom, indeed, he had to a certain extent trained to that ferocity, for the sake of obtaining pardon and reward for himself, or even of averting a frightful crime. What he *could* do in his own proper character, he was resolved to do; and it is quite certain that he was ready to expose his own life to save that of Angela, if it could be done by hard blows and personal endeavour. But when the wily Tripoline vaguely suggested his plan, as if it had come from Bianca, the old chieftain interrupted him with a burst of indignation.

'I will have no more blood on my hands!' said he. 'These men are ruffians, if you will; but what am I?—what are you? Tell Bianca this; and tell her, too, that if she hears of a terrible accident, she will hear at the same time that one who has disgraced her name is no more. Further than this I cannot go.'

Haj-Ahmed, who had feared for a moment that Jeppo's anger would turn against himself, affected to approve of all this, and promised to make one more desperate effort to avert the wrath of the viceroy. He learned, in this interview, the exact position and numbers of the Black Band; and having secretly resolved that their destruction was now necessary to his own safety, and not caring much for Angela, except in so far as he could make her rescue a claim upon the protection of the marchese, mounted the mule on which he had come to the place of rendezvous, and instead of returning toward Palermo, rode to San Antonio, a small hamlet, situated at the point where the track from Sferacavallo joins the high-road to Trapani. On

his way, in a deep glen not far from the village, he noticed a party of some twenty or thirty soldiers, who had just arrived, and were engaged in bivouacking. It was possible, indeed, that this was a mere ordinary movement of troops; but Haj-Ahmed felt persuaded that the well-studied plan of the viceroy was receiving its execution, and that on all sides a cordon of armed men was gradually closing in round the mountainous district where the Black Band was known to be.

At San Antonio, Haj-Ahmed met Andrea, and without explaining in what frame of mind he had found Jeppo, urged him to lose no time in collecting his party. We have seen that the young man obeyed implicitly. On parting, they promised to meet again at the hamlet, the Arab undertaking to act as a guide to the ruined castle, and to betray its inmates into the hands of the friends of Angela.

It rained during the night that succeeded the landing of the party from Maretimo; but the sandy tracks and roads absorbed the moisture, and the fields and forests seemed fresher to the eye, whilst the air was cooler and more balmy. The sun was at its zenith, in a sky checkered by a few clouds, that sometimes collected in a menacing way, foreboding a storm, when a gentleman on horseback, followed by a servant, rode into the hamlet of San Antonio. Their beasts were evidently wearied by a sharp morning's work; and although the gentleman seemed impatient to proceed at once to Palermo, he was compelled to agree to a short time of rest. Otherwise, it was certain that they would break down on the road, said the people of the hamlet. Haj-Ahmed, accoutred like a mere Sicilian peasant, was in the group, and was forward in giving his advice: he had recognised the Marchese Belmonte, although within a few days the fatigues and dangers, and still more the terrible mental struggles the unhappy father had undergone, seemed to have aged him by years. He stood stooping at the door of the cottage, called by courtesy the albergo, like a man in the last stage of some terrible disease. A hectic flush was on his cheek; and he now and then coughed drily, and almost angrily, as if it surprised him that his iron constitution should at last shew signs of giving way.

The Tripoline, after some time of reflection, came to his side.

'Signor Marchese,' said he softly, 'can we speak a few words together?'

He was recognised with surprise, although, as we have said, he had changed his distinctive costume. The marchese walked hastily towards a retired place.

'Why are you here? What is the news? My daughter—is she still well?'

'So far, yes,' replied Haj-Ahmed, who, however, went on to relate all that had passed in Palermo within the last few days, insisting especially on the fact that the viceroy, from motives of personal jealousy, in order to humiliate and crush the marchese, had issued orders that on that very day the Black Band should be attacked, no matter what became of their prisoners.

'By this time,' said he, purposely exaggerating, 'the soldiers are already on their march; it is perhaps too late to check them!'

He added, however, that from what he had learned, the party destined to act more immediately might still be in the neighbourhood.

'Do you see that lofty mountain?' he said, pointing to the peak crowned by the Torre dei Giganti, which rose against the southern horizon. 'Your daughter is there. A strong party of soldiers, collected during the night, is marching to storm it, whilst many regiments are distributed in an impassable cordon all round. Would you dare to despise the viceroy so far as to order the attack to be postponed—say for a few hours—say until nightfall?'

The marchese staggered like a drunken man, and grasped at the air, as if feeling for support.

'Who commands the attacking party?' he said.

'Captain Albizi.'

'He is a kinsman of mine. But of what value is a delay?'

'By one hour after nightfall, your daughter will be rescued.'

Haj-Ahmed rapidly related that Paolo and Walter, with their friends, had passed, under his guidance, through an unguarded defile of the mountains during that night, and were waiting in a sure place of concealment, within an hour's march of the ruined castle. If they attempted to approach during the day, they would have to make a regular attack like the soldiery; and thus the whole plan would be frustrated.

'I must precede them, and lull all suspicion,' he said.

'But why this separate action? Cannot your people and the soldiers combine?'

Haj-Ahmed shrugged his shoulders, and shook his head, not deigning to explain that by taking part with one section of the free spirits of Sicily against another, he was only incurring a moment's danger whilst earning perhaps a permanent reward; but that to act with the soldiery would expose him certainly to perish in a few days by some enthusiastic assassin's knife. He could not in his own mind understand or appreciate the difference, but he knew of it as of a fact, with which he had become acquainted in the way of business. The marchese understood that the Tripoline must have his own way, or be unserviceable. He therefore agreed, despising all official rules, to ride after the party commanded by Captain Albizi, if it had already begun to move, and use his personal influence to check the attack. The Haj saw him depart on his lamed horse, and rubbed his hands, murmuring:

'Shall I not, indeed, deserve a reward? What could these hot-brained fools, who understand nothing but hard knocks, have done without me?'

Then he mounted his sleek mule, and rode away towards the place where he had appointed to meet his accomplices. Some soldiers, who pretended to be lounging amidst the trees near the path he followed, seemed inclined to stop him, but he looked so pious and inoffensive that they refrained. Winding along a thickly wooded slope, he obtained sight of the glen where he had already seen the party of Captain Albizi. They were still there, and greatly increased in numbers. A person in plain clothes, who rode rapidly up, he recognised as the marchese. Having convinced himself that his suggestions had been so far followed, the Haj plied his heels, and was soon far on the way to the Torre dei Giganti.

Many changes had taken place in the thoughts of the Marchese Belmonte since the night when we last left him on the Island of Maretime. Although no new light had as yet been thrown on his past history, and he had no reason at all to suppose that the aim of his hatred had been misdirected, yet since Paolo had been rescued, under circumstances so irritating to his self-love, he seemed as if he had been relieved of a burden. Instead of blaming the commandant—when reflection had calmed him—he spoke of the event as a matter of course, and promised that it should lead to no evil consequences. When Justo endeavoured to obtain a private interview, in order to plead his own cause, and betray the secret of the correspondence that had taken place with the unknown count, he was rudely repulsed; and thought it wise, as he was not watched, to escape from the island, and hide until the storm blow over. The marchese, therefore, parted from the commandant on good terms, and returned to Sicily; not, it is true, with the settled purpose of forgiving Paolo and joining him in happiness to Angela—that was impossible as long as the form of Speranza demanding vengeance remained present to his mind—

but without that asperity of anger which had before made him miserable. He no longer thought it would be so very dreadful a thing if his daughter were to escape into the arms of her husband; and tried at anyrate to believe, that in after-years, provided they remained absent from his sight, he could think of the event without any poignant grief.

Accustomed to reflect on the character of his own actions, the marchese was surprised that the announcement in noway troubled him, that the leader of the party about to rescue Angela was Paolo himself. A short time before, the proposal made by Haj-Ahmed, that he should act a subsidiary part on that day, and be content to keep the soldiers back whilst the son of the man he had so long hated carried off his prize, would have provoked a strange access of indignation. Now he did not look upon the matter in that light at all. The father alone was alive within him. He felt—somewhat too late, it is true—that it was his duty first to free Angela, and then to debate what should be the manner of her life.

It was in a spirit of atonement, therefore, that he acted, when urging his tired horse into the glen, where the party of soldiers were getting ready to march, he called out to Captain Albizi to stay. The young officer listened to him with surprise. He had been told that the expedition had been planned with the knowledge of the marchese; and had already very freely expressed his disapprobation of so unnatural a father. But he had received positive orders.

'Here they are in writing,' he said; 'I am to attack the banditti this afternoon, without fail. No pretence, it is expressly said, must withhold me. What can I do?'

'I will answer for you, my cousin, to the viceroy and the king,' said the marchese.

The captain bowed, and remained silent. He was ambitious, and had heard that his noble relative's influence was on the wane. According to all military rules, moreover, to grant his request—which was no other than to disobey positive orders—would subject him to degradation from his rank. The marchese urged his point eagerly, begging and promising. He spoke more fully than his pride would otherwise have allowed him to do, because he felt that even minutes gained were valuable. His words fell like water-drops on a granite rock.

'I cannot so sin against discipline,' at length exclaimed Captain Albizi, perceiving that time was passing, and that his men, quite ready to march, were waiting his orders. 'Let us move on together; and something may happen on the way.'

Albizi leaped into his saddle, and raised his sword, and a dozen dragoons, forming the vanguard of the party, went away prancing beneath the trees. Forty or fifty foot-soldiers followed at a brisk pace. The marchese rode by the side of the captain, still entreating him to march deliberately. Five or six horsemen brought up the rear.

It was now more than two hours past noon; and the Torre dei Giganti was at least three hours distant for a party of that kind. The marchese, therefore, did not give up the hope that some accident might delay their advance. What he chiefly feared was, that news of their approach should precede them, and that the Black Band, driven to desperation, should at once perpetrate the crime they had threatened, and then disperse to seek safety in flight. Time seemed to move with fearful rapidity. They passed through woods, and down valleys, and over hills, the tower now and then appearing in the distance—now to the left, now to the right, as the road wound. Already more than half the ground had been traversed, when an unusual darkness overspread the country. The sky had become covered with clouds, which rapidly thickened and sank towards the earth. Now and then a rumbling sound appeared



to go round the horizon; then there was, as it were, a stream of lightning, that filled the whole forest with a lurid light; and then a crash, as if a mighty marble dome had cracked overhead. Involuntarily, both men and horses slackened their pace; the atmosphere weighed heavily on them; they questioned the heavens with their eyes. Flash succeeded to flash—roar to roar. At length the wind began to howl over the country, and the branches of the trees dashed together, and clanged as if they had been of iron.

'This is a good sign,' cried Albizi to his men, who had halted without the word of command. 'When the wind rises, the thunder-cloud moves away. We shall be drenched presently. On, then; we shall have warm work before sun-down.'

'Do you not think,' said the marchese hoarsely, 'that this storm is hurled across your path as a warning to stay?'

Albizi tried to repress a sceptical smile, but failing, turned away. Having reflected a moment, he said very sincerely:

'Believe me, if an hour's delay can do you any good—which I cannot understand—we have already granted it to you; and I do not regret it. We shall not come to close quarters before the night.'

The marchese was somewhat cheered by these words; and although his horse stumbled, and often tried to lag, pressed forward to the head of the column. They were moving through a vast forest, stretching over a level country to the foot of the range of hills on the summit of which the Torre dei Giganti stands, and even up the first slopes. They were not now more than a mile from their destination. The rain had, indeed, begun to fall in torrents; but the lightning-flashes and thunder-claps continued almost without intermission. Now and then, through a break in the trees, they could see the tall form of the tower standing out in bold relief against the clouds, and illumined by a succession of blue gleams. The twilight had begun, and a dark tempestuous night was threatened.

Two figures on horseback came riding into the glade along which the party were marching, and turning sharp round, galloped in the direction of the tower. The dragoons instantly gave chase; and the marchese, whose beast refused to quicken its steps, in vain called them to refrain, not knowing why, but suspecting that these riders who thus confronted the storm must be labouring in his daughter's cause. Presently the soldiers came back with a couple of prisoners—Bianca and Antonio, the servant of the Castelnoves.

'What news of my child?—what news of my child?' cried the marchese, not wasting time in vain greeting.

'You can save her! We can save her!' exclaimed Bianca full of joy. 'The viceroy died this morning; you are second in authority in Sicily, and succeed him till the king's pleasure be known. Stop the advance of the soldiers, and let me go to avert a greater danger.'

'You hear this?' said the marchese to Albizi, assuming an air of authority.

'It may be true,' replied the young officer embarrassed; 'but it may be false. I do not know this lady; and my orders'—

'Soldiers, obey the viceroy!' cried Bianca to the astonished men, who had broken their ranks, and crowded round, listening to this strange dialogue. Dispirited by the rain and by fatigue, they no longer felt any martial emotions, and would gladly have received orders to seek lodgings in some neighbouring village. Albizi, who believed that Bianca was playing a part, determined to temporise.

'We can advance slowly,' he said; 'and, if advisable, send on a flag of truce. My duty will be accomplished if I occupy the tower this night.'

'But whilst we tarry here,' cried Bianca, 'our

friends are engaged perhaps in an unnecessary conflict; and the tragedy we would avoid is being accomplished. Hark! What was that?'

A death-like lull, disturbed only by the pattering of the rain on the leaves, had succeeded a prolonged thunder-clap. The sound that had attracted Bianca's attention was not the re-awakening of the voice of the elements; it was a sharp succession of reports, melted gradually into one roar. The attack on the tower had begun just at the very moment when it was rendered needless.

'Form, soldiers; and march!' shouted Albizi. 'Dragoons, follow me.'

The mounted soldiers galloped forward after their officer, and soon began to ascend a vast slope, which in that direction led up towards the tower. The marchese took Antonio's horse, and followed with Bianca. They soon got ahead of the footmen. It was now quite night; but their accustomed eyes could make out the outline of the hill they were ascending, and the huge form of the tower. A wind rushing against their faces brought still the sound of desultory firing to them, mingled now and then with furious shouts. The Black Band, taken by surprise, were defending themselves with the desperation of doomed men.

## THE MONTH:

### SCIENCE AND ARTS.

THE session at the Royal Institution was opened, as usual, by Mr Faraday with a lecture elucidating still more the science of electricity and magnetism—a branch of natural philosophy which he has investigated for many years with signal success, as demonstrated by his brilliant discoveries. The chief point put forward on this occasion was, that the theories of force—of gravitation—generally accepted since the days of Newton, will ere long have to undergo great and material modifications. Mr Faraday entertains the notion—a very old one—that gravity is not simply a property inherent in matter, acting 'inversely as the square of the distance,' but that it is a subtle element, pervading all space, and endowed probably with a duality of power, such as is exhibited by electricity and magnetism. According to this view, gravity may be nothing more than an electric or magnetic function in perpetual activity. Those who have watched the learned professor's progress for the past few years, know that he has been tending towards this result. We think, however, that although the theory of the laws of force may come to be modified, gravity will scarcely be found resolvable into any kind of matter, however attenuated; but we may expect astronomers, observant as they now are of solar phenomena, to contribute explanatory evidence on this important subject.

Dr Tyndall, too, has lectured at the same Institution, and before the Royal Society, on the 'Nature of the Force by which Bodies are repelled from the Poles of a Magnet,' a subject on which much difference of opinion exists—German, Italian, and British magneticians have each his own way of explaining it. The difference of opinion arises, perhaps, more from the essential difficulties of the question, and the diverse behaviour of the substances experimented on, than from any real difference in the phenomena. Could the philosophers work together in the same laboratory, they would doubtless come to the same conclusions. A bar of bismuth, for example, suspended between the poles of a magnet, takes up an east and west position—the reverse of that of an iron bar similarly suspended; but if you subject that same bar of bismuth to great pressure, it will then behave as the iron does. Until all such phenomena are thoroughly observed, no satisfactory explanation can be arrived at; nor can those who are examining the magnetism of rocks, properly

estimate the different magnetic condition of strata as affected by pressure. Obscure as the subject is, it has now a fair chance of being cleared up; for at no time have the means of research been so ample and excellent, or the spirit to use them so intelligent and persevering.

Stockholm is now connected with the system of European telegraphs, by a wire sunk across the Sound from Copenhagen—an important connection, considering the present aspect of political affairs. Arrangements are likewise being made for getting prompt intelligence from the Crimea. A submarine cable is to be laid from Varna to Balaklava. Messrs Newall have twisted the 400 miles of wire necessary for the purpose since the 15th of December, and the whole is now on board a steamer on its way to the Black Sea. This accomplished, and the service of couriers established from Varna to Semlin, we shall get news from the Allied camp in about three days. An absurd statement has got abroad, that by the use of an apparatus invented by Mr Frischen, of Hanover, any number of messages may be sent from either end of the line at one and the same time, without interference; each to arrive clear and distinct! We hear from Piedmont, that Signor Borrelli is testing a contrivance—a railway-telegraph, which, connected with a train, signals its progress and position to the trains in advance and in the rear.

Want of light, often a detriment to diving operations, is now likely to be remedied by a happy application of the electric-light. The apparatus, for use under water, consists of a glass cylinder, fitted with a lens emitting parallel rays, and inside with the requisite appliances; the whole hermetically closed, and of sufficient strength to bear the pressure at a depth of 200 feet. It is not heavy, and can be easily carried in the hand from place to place, without disturbing its connection by wires with the battery. When it is to be lighted, the diver turns a fine screw, which brings the coke points near each other; they immediately become incandescent, and give out for two hours a steady light, powerful enough to illuminate a circle of forty feet radius. One of the public baths on the Seine is illuminated by a light fixed thirty feet above the water, in connection with Deleuil's apparatus—a Fresnel lens; and the effect is such, that a swimmer can be seen ten feet below the surface. The electric-light has been used also at the works of the new Westminster Bridge; and we hear that the new bridge at Chelsea is to be lighted by similar means.

The Photographic Society's Exhibition, now open near Trafalgar Square, is the best that has yet been seen in this country, and worthily does it sustain the reputation of British photographers. Whole pages of description would be required to do justice to it; but we can notice only a few of the more prominent subjects. Among these are portraits, life-size, without distortion; highly magnified images of insect structure, as shown by the oxy-hydrogen microscope; similar images of botanical specimens, valuable for permanent reference, and for educational purposes; stereoscopic pictures on glass, of wonderful beauty; images of clouds, shewing remarkable improvement in that difficult branch of the art; and, last, Mr Fenton's landscapes—views in Wharfedale—which are a real triumph of photography. To exceed the fidelity and beauty with which the distances are represented, and the aerial perspective preserved, would seem to be scarcely possible. Our photographers will be able to take honourable rank in the forthcoming Exhibition at Paris. The value of albumenised glass is more and more recognised. Mr Mayall shews that the best albumen for practical purposes is that of hen's eggs. It is easily procurable; but the eggs should be fresh, not more than five days old; and country eggs are preferable to those laid in towns. Here are hints which amateurs will do well to profit by. Mr Vogel, writing from Venice, suggests

that by communicating a steady tone to a glass-plate, it might be possible to print photographically the figure of sound.

Mr Gardiner, governor of Bristol jail, continues his photographs of culprits; and has devised a process by which he can take an instantaneous likeness unknown to his captive, and with good service to the cause of justice. A man, for instance, is sent in, whom the governor suspects to be an old offender; he takes his portrait, sends a copy to the other jails of the district, and in most cases gets such particulars in return as enables him to award the proper measure of punishment. If this practice were generally adopted, we should in time get the 'true effigies' of our whole criminal population, and might find the result to be a check on crime.

A meeting has been held at Manchester, to form an Association for the Prevention of Boiler Explosions—a public recognition of the fact that such explosions are preventible. Let the employers of steam look to it! In some of the large factories, too, a smoke-consuming method has been adopted; namely, a double furnace, so constructed that all the smoke and vapours arising from the first fire are entirely consumed in passing through the second. The same method has been successfully tried in France. We may add, that a stove for heating or cooking, to burn tallow, has been manufactured for Price's Patent Candle Company, with a view to its introduction into the Crimea.

Something is being done at Bristol in the way of a new mode of propulsion for steamers. Float-boards, which have a vertical and horizontal motion, are fitted inside a chamber in the stern of the vessel, where there is scarcely a possibility of their being injured, and kept in motion by machinery, of which an endless railway forms part. Mr Tucker, of the same city, proposes a 'safety poop' for ships, to be made of iron, and attached in such a way as to be readily detached in case of emergency, when it would become a life-raft—the doors serving as rudders—large enough to save all on board, and to be towed by the boats. Another success has been achieved for steam-navigation in the building of the *Tachtalia*, a steamer with four paddles, for traffic on the Danube. Of forty horse-power, and large enough to carry a considerable number of passengers, this vessel draws only 12½ inches of water, and will thus be able to pass the dreaded shallows of the Iron Gate at all seasons.

Lieutenant Maury, of the Observatory at Washington, has drawn up a plan for the safer navigation of the Atlantic, in which two routes are recommended, the principle being that adopted by coachmen on land—passing an approaching vehicle on a given side. He leaves sailing-ships undisturbed, as the prevalent winds compel them to take widely different routes in going to or returning from America. But for steamers from England, he suggests a route running sixty miles to the south of Cape Race, shaving Sable Island, and so on to Sandy Hook. Returning to England, to make for the offing of Cape Clear, which would be to follow a line one hundred miles south of the outward-bound route. Should the scheme come to be generally recognised and acted on, the chances of collision will be materially lessened.

It may be noted here, that a work is now going on, sanctioned by the Neapolitan government in 1852, as important in some respects as the drainage of the Lake of Haarlem. About half-way between Rome and Naples, in a basin of the Apennines, lies a large expanse of water, known as Lake Fucino. The soil around it is extremely fertile, but liable to be flooded—the differences of level varying, according to season, from twenty to forty feet. Besides swamp and drowned land, there are the ruins of three ancient cities somewhere beneath the waves; and antiquaries, not less than agriculturists, are watching for the result of the

scheme for the drainage of the lake. The works are taken in hand by a company who are to have them completed in eight years, when 33,000 acres of the most fertile land in Italy will be laid dry, and the whole of a large district ameliorated. The undertaking was first talked about in the days of Julius Cæsar; next Claudius attempted it, and employed 30,000 men for eleven years in driving a tunnel through the mountains, which answered its purpose for a time, but subsequently became choked by neglect. This tunnel is now to be greatly enlarged, and provided with sluices to regulate the flow of the water. Is the carrying out of such a work in Italy to be regarded as a symptom of returning vigour?

The Society of Arts has another addition to its industrial pathology, in the form of a Report, signed by competent authorities, on trades injurious to the eyes. We cannot do more than glance at the contents of this important document, in which, among causes of injury, overwork is stated to be highly fatal, while work within proper limits is beneficial. Flickering lights are injurious; the light should fall on the work, not on the eye, hence the utility of shades and screens. Dress-makers should avoid sewing black by candle-light; the consequent strain on the sight being more hurtful than is supposed. Shoe-binders and boot-closers suffer from the same cause. Smoking a short pipe is also injurious to the eye. The Report mentions further, that in some factories an eye-douche has been fitted for the use of the operatives. It consists of a cistern, at some distance above the floor, filled with water, a pipe descending from it with the lower end, to which a tap is fitted, bent upwards. Any one wishing to refresh his eye, or cleanse it from dust, holds the organ over the orifice of the tube, turns the tap, the water springs up as from a fountain, and the operation is effectually performed.

Another subject which has occupied the attention of the Society, is peat-charcoal—its value and utility. Mr Longmaid read a paper thereupon, and converted saw-dust into charcoal before the eyes of the members. He dwelt on the fact that English iron, being smelted with coal, is not convertible into steel of so good a quality as is the iron we get from Sweden, which is smelted with charcoal: hence our large importations of Swedish iron. But although we have no inexhaustible forests to char, we have the bogs of Ireland, 3,000,000 acres, in some places thirty feet thick, containing more than 6,000,000,000 tons; the value of which, when converted into peat-charcoal, would be enormous. There is a company already at work on the Bog of Allen, who produce about 1000 tons of charcoal a year; but measures must be taken on a much larger scale before this useful substance will be available, as it might be, for commercial, agricultural, and sanitary purposes. Apropos of these last: it is satisfactory to know that ten tons of peat-charcoal have been sent out for the use of the hospital at Scutari.

The Horticultural Society, looking beyond the present environment of frost and snow, has determined to hold its first flower-show in May at Gore House, Kensington, instead of at Chiswick; and it has come to the resolution, to pay greater attention than in times past to improvements in matters horticultural—to real practical objects, not mere dilettanteism. If this resolve be faithfully carried out, the Society will soon be in a position to open new resources in the shape of vegetables and plants useful as food or in manufactures. In connection with gardening, it will not be out of place to mention that the weather-summary for 1854 shews twelve inches less than the average of rain for the year—many places in Oxfordshire and Berkshire are still distressed for want of water; that the temperature of the whole year was one degree below the average; that between the greatest cold of January (thermometer on the grass) and the greatest heat of

July, the difference was 124 degrees; and that December was remarkable for the large amount of ozone present in the atmosphere.

Invention is still busy over the appliances of war: Sheffield offers a new bullet superior to the Minié. Mr Gravalet proves, in an able pamphlet, that steam gun-boats, to be propelled by the jet instead of screw or paddles, are by far the most serviceable, especially for shallow draught. Mortar-vessels are being built and fitted at the dockyards, to carry a mortar weighing five tons, which throws a thirteen-inch shell two miles. Hitherto, the weight of so vast a piece of ordnance has presented almost insurmountable difficulties; but now it is supported on a frame which oscillates with the boat, and thus preserves its proper position under all circumstances. A whole fleet of these vessels is in preparation. Mr Nasmyth wishes to mount his monster wrought-iron guns in a similar way. The Lowca Ironworks, near Whitehaven, have turned out the 'belemnite shot,' so named from its form, which is more effective than round shot of twice the diameter. Its shape is described as 'cylindro-conoid'; it is made in three pieces, so contrived, that at the moment of firing a ring of lead expands, and closes up the windage of the cannon—the ball, as a consequence, being expelled with greater force. Another advantage is, that by the reduction of the diameter, the weight of artillery may be proportionately reduced: 18-pounders need not be heavier than the present nines; and even a 68-pounder might become manageable in the field. This belemnite, according to the inventor, is *safe* to do mischief at 5000 yards; and when used as a shell, it sticks into the wall against which it is fired, and splits the masonry by its explosion. A Birmingham firm has contrived machinery for making bayonet-blades by the rolling process, which, with two men and a boy, turns out 300 a day; while not more than 25 blades could be made by the same hands, in the same time, without the machinery. The price is thus lowered without altering the quality; and it is said, that with additional rollers, the supply of blades may be increased at pleasure. And, last, to shew the effects of war in another form, the number of ships that passed the Sound in 1854 was 5000 short of that of 1853; the greatest falling off, as may be supposed, being in British vessels.

#### CATCHING A TARTAR.

On a bright sunny day, some years ago, when the slavers carried on their infamous operations with a boldness equal only to their success—notwithstanding the exertions used by our cruisers to enforce the various treaties entered into by this country with several of the European powers for the abolition of the vile trade—Her Majesty's brig *Tardy* might have been seen riding at single anchor off the British fort of Accra, a most agreeable and comparatively healthy little town on the Gold Coast.

The day in question was unusually hot, even for that proverbially roasting climate. There was not a breath of air sufficient to ruffle the surface of the sea, nor a cloud to temper the fierce rays of the vertical sun, penetrating through the snow-white awnings with a power almost insupportable to the panting and exhausted crew, who were assembled in listless groups on the fore-castle, longing for the slightest breath of air to reinvigorate their exhausted frames. The only sign approaching to activity appeared in the person of the young officer second in command, who, as he slowly paced the quarter-deck, occasionally paused to examine with a glass the low sandy shore glistening with peculiar brightness at the foot of the lofty range of mountains which form the bold background of this part of the coast.



The *Tardy* was one of those old ten-gun brigs that are now, happily, nearly extinct in the service. She was a disgrace to the country that owned her, as well as to the officer who had the misfortune to command her; and with all the bad qualities peculiar to that class of vessels, had no redeeming points to recommend her. She was a perfect tub, and a reproach to the gallant fellows that belonged to her, who for eighteen months had toiled in the vain hope that a prize would eventually reward their exertion and sufferings on that pestilential coast. Hitherto, however, they had been doomed to disappointment. The excitement of the chase, usually so intense when the sailing qualities of the pursuer and pursued are nearly on a par, had but few charms for the *Tardys*, whose visions of prize-money and honour grew more and more indistinct as the retreating sails of the chase slowly and too surely vanished on the horizon.

Such mortifying failures—the unfulfilling result of a trial of speed between Her Majesty's brig and the low rakish clippers of the coast—were still more annoying, from the fact of the scale and the division of the prize-money having been altered shortly before the *Tardy* arrived on the station. Formerly, £10 per head had been allowed for every slave captured, which was shared by the entire squadron; but at the time of the *Tardy's* arrival at Accra, on her way from Sierra Leone to her cruising-ground in the Bight of Biafra, £5 per head was allowed to be shared only by the officers and crew of the vessel that made the capture. However beneficial this arrangement might be to the fast-sailing cruiser, it was but a bitter mockery to the hapless *Tardys*.

We left the officer—the senior mate already alluded to—watching with his telescope the low shores of British, Dutch, and Danish Accra, with the evident determination of allowing not so much as a canoe to break the blockade without his cognizance. His vigilance was shortly rewarded by the appearance of the commander's gig, leaving the shore, and under the vigorous strokes of her lusty crew, she quickly reached the side of the brig, bringing on board the commander himself. After the bustle incidental to his arrival had somewhat subsided, the mate accompanied his chief below, whither we will follow.

'Well, Mr Winton,' commenced the commander as soon as they reached the cabin, 'I suppose you have have short, and are all ready for tripping as soon as the land-breeze makes its appearance. The canoes containing the cart-wheels and grass will be alongside within an hour,' continued he, without noticing his junior's bow of assent; 'and then the sooner we are off the better.'

'Did you hear of there being any vessels in the rivers about to sail, sir?' inquired the mate.

'Why, no; nothing for certain,' replied the lieutenant. 'The consul was too intent on finding out what I could possibly want with his old coach-wheels, to pay much attention to my inquiries on that subject. But I rather think, from what I heard from another source, that the *Vecua* is nearly ready for sea; so, possibly, we shall be off the Bonny just in time to intercept her.'

'I hope we shall, sir. It is rather vexatious to be always returning into port empty-handed.'

After some further conversation relative to the hoped-for capture of the *Vecua*—a well-known Spanish slave-schooner—the two officers returned on deck, where they saw several of the expected canoes slowly approaching the brig, looking more like moving haystacks than legitimate African canoes. On their arrival alongside, their strange freight caused a good deal of wonder among the hands.

'Well,' said an old Salt, 'I spects this is about the rummiest go as ever was see'd on this here part of the coast. I wonder what the skipper's a-going to do with all this here dunnage.'

'Why, turn the *hooker* into a farmyard for monkeys and alligators, and thatch her in for a full due,' suggested a surly topman, who felt too sore on their ill success to be in any humour for joking.

'And make you Jenny Ducks. Eh, Bill?' said the first speaker, who was the captain of the fore-castle. 'What's the use of growling like a bear with a sore head? When'—

'Come, come, shipmate,' cried the incensed topman; 'gather in the slack of your jaw. I'm no croaker; but mind what I say'—

The rest of the sentence was lost through the interruption of the officer of the deck, who, having overheard the remarks of the men, sharply ordered them to attend to their duty; and in silence the remainder of the novel cargo was hoisted on board, much to the amusement of every one who was engaged in the operation.

During the afternoon all hands were busily engaged, under the personal superintendence of their commander, in stowing their acquisitions in so curious a way, that by sunset they had so completely altered the outward appearance of the brig, that no one who saw her leave the anchorage under the influence of a rattling land-breeze, would have imagined her to be the same vessel which a few hours before had been lazily riding on the glassy sea.

The greater portion of the long thick grass that had been brought on board, was made up into bundles, and stowed on the booms. The remainder of it was used for covering the coach-wheels, which, being made fast horizontally in the chains outside the vessel, gave her more the appearance of an overladen trader than one of Her Majesty's cruisers. The foretop-gallant-mast and flying jib-boom were now got on board, and a short maintop-gallant-mast sent up instead of the lofty spar she always carried abaft. This, with an old and patched suit of sails cautiously reefed, made the disguise complete.

There being nothing now to detain the brig, all sail was made for her cruising-ground, which she reached shortly afterwards. About noon of the eighth day after leaving Accra, the *Tardy* being then off the entrance to the Bonny River, but out of sight of land, the look-out aloft reported a sail on the port-bow. This announcement caused the greatest delight to all hands on board the brig, as she had been dodging about in that locality for several days, in the expectation that one or more of the slavers known to be up the river and about to descend would make their appearance.

As well as could be ascertained from the distance, the stranger appeared a long, low, rakish schooner, evidently a Guineaman, and no doubt one of the gentlemen with whom the *Tardys* desired a more intimate acquaintance. One thing was very plain, she had little or no wind. What there was of it, however, was fair for her running out from the land, giving her the weather-gauge of the *Tardy*; and this, so far, was just what the officer of the brig wished, as it allowed the slaver the option of speaking them, if so disposed.

In about an hour from the time she was reported, the *Tardy*, by a succession of short tacks, apparently with the intention of working-up for the entrance of the Bonny, had arrived within four or five miles of the slaver, which was lazily forging ahead, under the influence of a light breeze, and decreasing every moment her distance from the disguised cruiser, apparently without the least idea of there being danger in her path. From the tops of the brig, a number of woolly heads could be seen evidently taking their constitutional—a sure proof that their masters were engaged in no lawful commerce, and that the schooner was what all hands on board the *Tardy* had expected, and in truth hoped.

'They must surely intend to board us, as they do

not alter their course,' said the commander. 'Shew them the colours, Mr Winton,' continued that officer; 'perhaps the sight of the old flag may tempt them to pay us a visit.'

The British ensign was soon waving from the *Tardy's* peak, but the schooner did not deign to shew hers in reply.

In the meanwhile, both vessels gradually approached each other. The crew of the *Tardy*, with the exception of a few of the old steady hands, who were disguised in red flannel shirts, were lying down at their quarters, out of sight, but ready at a moment's notice to use with hearty good-will the guns that were screened from the sight of the pirate craft by the closed ports. Jokes were flying about in plenty, as the happy and excited Jacks slapped their pockets in anticipation of the golden lining with which they would soon be furnished.

The last tack made by the *Tardy*—in as slovenly a manner as possible—placed the schooner about half a mile dead to windward; and as she still appeared to be without the least suspicion of having so formidable an antagonist in her vicinity, the excitement on board Her Majesty's brig, from the captain to the cabin-boy, became almost painful. Every available glass on board was levelled at the wicked-looking craft, to watch with eager glance her minutest movements.

After a short pause, the suspense was relieved by the gaudy flag of Spain being seen slowly ascending to the main peak of the slaver, and immediately followed by a noisy summons from her foremost gun for the *Tardy* to heave-to.

'Now we have the rogues!' exclaimed the commander. 'Up mainsail—square the mainyard;' were the rapid orders. 'Don't hurry there, lads,' he continued; 'we must not alarm them just yet. Belay, there—belay,' was the final order before the *Tardy* became stationary to await quietly the result.

Onward came the beautiful schooner, gracefully bending under the lively breeze, perfectly unconscious of the reception that awaited her. As she slightly altered her course to pass under the *Tardy's* stern, a crowd of impatient desperadoes were seen clustering the gangways, ready to pounce upon their expected prey. Too late, however, they perceived their error; when rounding-to under the lee of the royal cruiser, a formidable battery shewed itself to their astonished gaze, instead of the terrified crew of a defenceless trader.

On becoming aware of their position, the ruffians were at first too much bewildered to pay any attention to the cruiser's summons for them to surrender; but a messenger, in the shape of a 32-pound shot, soon brought them to their bearings, when, seeing all chance of escape perfectly hopeless, the colours of the slaver were hauled down. A boat's crew from the *Tardy*, under the command of the senior mate, was soon in possession of the prize, which, as had been anticipated, proved to be the *Vecua*, a splendid craft of about 200 tons, manned by as desperate a set of scoundrels as were ever bound together by the ties of crime. The greater portion of them were sent on board the *Tardy*; the remainder, as well as the living freight, numbering 270 slaves, were retained on board the *Vecua*, which shortly afterwards sailed in charge of the prize-crew for Sierra Leone, leaving her captors diligently cruising, in the hope of winning further laurels. A few days after the *Vecua* reached her destination, her case was tried in the courts. As she was taken full of her miserable human freight, there was no difficulty about her condemnation, which took place accordingly. The negroes were of course emancipated; no doubt greatly to the disgust of their late masters, whose crest-fallen appearance, as they sullenly wandered about Sierra Leone, afforded the highest gratification to the prize-crew of Her Majesty's brig *Tardy*.

#### WINTER MOONLIGHT.

LOUD-VOICED Night, with the wild winds blowing

Many a tune;

Stormy Night, with white rain-clouds going

Over the moon;

Mystic Night, that each minute changes—

Now, as blue as the mountain-ranges

Far, far away;

Now, as black as a heart where strange is

Joy, night or day.

Wondrous Moonlight! unlike all moonlights

Since we were born:

That on a hundred bright as moonlights

Looks in slow scorn:

Moonlights where the old vine-leaves quiver,

Moonlights golden on lake or river

Where known paths lie,

Moonlights—Night, blot their like for ever

Out of thy sky!

Hail, new Moonlight, strange, wild, and stormy,

Wintry and bold!

Hail, fierce Wind, that can strengthen, warm me,

Be it ne'er so cold!

Aye, God driven, this deluge rages,

He doth pour out, and He assuages;

Under his hand

Drifting, Noah-like, into the ages

We shall touch land.

#### AMERICAN BOBLINK.

The following beautiful sketch of a popular American bird is from Washington Irving's *Chronicles of Wolfert's Roost*:—I have shewn him only as I saw him at first, in what I may call the poetical part of his career, when he in a manner devoted himself to elegant pursuits and enjoyments, and was a bird of music and song, and taste and sensibility, and refinement. While this lasted, he was sacred from injury; the very school-boy would not fling a stone at him, and the merest rustic would pause to listen to his strain. But mark the difference. As the year advances, as the clover-blossoms disappear, and the spring fades into summer, he gradually gives up his elegant tastes and habits, doffs his poetical suit of black, assumes a russet dusty garb, and sinks to the gross enjoyments of common vulgar birds. His notes no longer vibrate on the ear; he is stuffing himself with the seeds of the tall weeds on which he lately swung and chanted so melodiously. He has become a 'bon vivant,' a gourmand; with him now there is nothing like the 'joys of the table.' In a little while, he grows tired of plain homely fare, and is off on a gastronomical tour in quest of foreign luxuries. We next hear of him, with myriads of his kind, banqueting among the reeds of the Delaware, and grown corpulent with good feeding. He has changed his name in travelling. Boblinco no more—he is the *Reed-bird* now, the much sought for tit-bit of Pennsylvanian epicures; the rival in unlucky fame of the ortolan! Wherever he goes, pop! pop! pop!—every rusty firelock in the country is blazing away. He sees his companions falling by thousands around him. Does he take warning and reform? Alas! not he. Incurable epicure! again he wings his flight. The rice-swamps of the south invite him. He gorges himself among them almost to bursting; he can scarcely fly for corpulency. He has once more changed his name, and is now the famous *Rice-bird* of the Carolinas. Last stage of his career: behold him spitted, with dozens of his corpulent companions, and served up, a vaunted dish, on the table of some southern gastronome!

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